

POISONED GRAPES OF DIABOLICAL LANDRU, FRENCH BLUEBEARD, KILLED UNINTENDED VICTIM, BUT HE LAUGHED AT MISTAKE

UNTOUCHED BY NEWS OF WOMAN'S DEATH, HE WOOS ANOTHER

Full of Attention and Fascinating Ways, Arch Criminal Made Love the Same Evening to Another Whose Slaying He Was Deliberately Planning.

(By WILLIAM LE QUEUX.

Famous Criminologist and Author of "The Fifth Finger," "The Four Faces," "Tracked by Wireless," etc.

LANDRU'S early life is described by Mr. Le Queux in the opening chapter of his story of the world's greatest love criminal. After years of petty swindling, Landru turned his attention to victimizing women, making love to them, getting control of their property and then killing them. Mme. Cuchet was one of the first. Landru poisoned her and her son, Andre, in a villa rented with her money, set up a furnace and burned their bodies.

He then turned his attention to luring other women to gruesome deaths by assuring them of his overwhelming devotion.

At the conclusion of last week's installment, Landru had just returned to his parlor from an adjoining room, where he had held a secret phone chat with an intended victim. There he found that two women visitors whom he had been entertaining had eaten some poisoned grapes. He had not intended that both should eat them, but he calmly said, "They were for you, ladies, take as many as you like."

It only occupied about ten minutes, for, knowing what he did, and realizing that no profit could be made, it did not interest him. The only interest was what effect the eating of those grapes would have upon her, and whether his dastardly experiment—now a double one—would prove successful.

On their return to where the little war widow awaited them Landru suggested that they should go out to the Casino de Paris, which they did, occupying three fauteuils in the front row.

After meeting Marie Combes next afternoon, Landru returned to his wife and family for the following five days, when, one morning, he called at the Rue des Petits-Champs, and there found a letter from Gabrielle Nadaud which, written in a shaky hand, read:

"I could not come to see you on Wednesday, for I am very ill. The doctor says I have pneumonia. Do come and see me—Gabrielle."

When Landru read it, he laughed grimly. Then aloud, he said: "I suppose it will be polite if I call. But I wonder how the actress feels just now?"

He took a taxi and was soon at Madame Nadaud's. The door was opened by a nurse.

"Madame is very ill indeed," she replied in a quiet, grave voice. "The doctor was here half-an-hour ago. She is delirious, and he has ordered that nobody shall see her."

"But what has happened?" asked Landru in pretended dismay and surprise.

"She is suffering from a most virulent form of pneumonia," replied the nurse. "Doctor Brunet has, I believe, very little hope for her recovery."

Landru assumed a most grave attitude, then, telling the nurse that he intended to telephone from time to time to make inquiry, he turned away—at heart very well satisfied with the result of his dastardly action.

After that he made inquiries over the telephone three times each day, as though solicitous of the poor woman's welfare. Each report was to the effect that she was rapidly growing worse, reports which gave secret satisfaction to the callous criminal, who carried in his pocket the assignment of the doomed woman's effects.

For eight days she hovered between life and death. The crucial hours were fast approaching.

On the ninth day Landru called at his "nest of love" in the Rue des Petits-Champs and telephoned to the nurse in breathless eagerness.

In reply to his inquiry came the words:

"I am delighted to tell you, m'sieur, that Madame took a turn for the better at midnight, and Doctor Brunet now says that with great care she will recover."

Landru put up the receiver, and then uttered a fierce imprecation. His villainous experiment had failed, and unless he murdered the war-widow by other means, her possessions must still remain in her own hands. To sell her furniture and hand her the proceeds was not Landru's plan. He always took all—or nothing. He divided with nobody, just as he trusted nobody, and never took a soul into his confidence.

The great secret of his success as a criminal assassin was that he had no accomplices, just as the success of the burglar Charles Peace was due. It was Landru's maxim that an accomplice always, sooner or later, brought suspicion, exposure, and arrest.

DIGGING FOR BODIES AT VILLAIN'S LOVE NEST



The Paris police digging up the garden of Landru's "love nest" in a search for bones of his victims.

danger ahead. The fact that she had recovered, while the red-haired actress had died by pure accident, appeared to him to be an ill omen. Therefore he thought it best to turn his attention to the woman who now sat so happily at his side.

He was bending to her, whispering some tender words into her ready ear, when, of a sudden, his quick, deep-set eyes caught sight of the figure of a man entering the cafe by the door at the opposite end.

Sight of the newcomer caused him to start. Indeed, a second later, he hurriedly excused himself and, taking up his hat, placed a five-franc note upon the table for the waiter, and slipped out.

The tall, well-dressed man who had just entered was none other than Monsieur Friedmann, the brother-in-law of Madame Cuchet. And while Madame Combes sat wondering at her lover's sudden disappearance, Landru was making his way with all speed along the boulevard in the direction of the Opera.

His victim's brother-in-law had written him a letter to Vernouillet, demanding news of Madame Cuchet, and this had been forwarded

to a poste-restante address in Paris which he had given to the local postmaster. The letter, which he had received only that morning, was a very disquieting one, for Monsieur Friedmann declared that he would leave no stone unturned until he had discovered the whereabouts of Madame Cuchet and her son, and concluded as follows:

"My wife, on her last visit to her sister at 'The Lodge,' in your absence opened a trunk and there they found a number of motor licenses in different names to yours; a quantity of women's clothing, and a number of papers of identity concerning various women, together with some strange letters. What does it all mean? We must have an explanation. Both mother and son have disappeared, and you alone know where they are! If you still hide yourself, then I intend to invoke the aid of the police. I give you three days in which to reply!"

CHAPTER V.

A Peep Into Bluebeard's Chamber. Whenever the amazing criminal Landru felt himself treading upon thin ice, he acted with a bold

audaciousness quiet inconceivable. If danger threatened, he became calm, affecting an injured innocence so completely genuine as to at once disarm suspicion. His ability to act as though in perfect good faith and honesty carried him across many a pitfall into which a less able criminal would undoubtedly have fallen.

The day following the receipt of Monsieur Friedmann's letter, he called upon his victim's brother-in-law, expressing his extreme regret that he had been absent on business in Lyons—from which city, he it remembered, he wrote to the police at Mantes—and had only just returned.

Monsieur Friedmann was in anything but an amiable mood. His wife had long ago denounced Landru as an escroc, and had urged her sister to leave him. Landru knew that, and at once pointed out the fact to Monsieur Friedmann.

"I certainly do not like the tone of your letter," he told him frankly. "Madame Cuchet and Andre have gone to London, probably influenced by your wife.

She has left me, and I am deserted and desolate. And yet you seem to insinuate that I am a swindler! You speak of the motor licenses your wife found. Certainly, I deal in motor-cars, and many licenses pass through my hands. Surely you have known that fact."

"But the women's clothes?" asked Monsieur Friedmann.

"Oh! I have lots. I often buy the household goods of women, and frequently have boxes of clothing. Every dealer has," laughed Landru.

"And the identification papers of women? There were five in the trunk my wife examined, and some letters. She showed them to Madame Cuchet."

"Oh, I'm glad she did," said Landru, quite unperturbed. "Women's papers often fall into my hands, because, sometimes, when a woman sells all her belongings, she does so with an intention of effacing her identity. It is done in Paris daily. It is quite easy, as you know, to get fresh identity papers—if you know the ropes."

"Well, I am not at all satis-

MISTAKE KILLED WRONG WOMAN

TWO women admirers of Landru visited the Bluebeard, and, while he was answering the phone in an adjoining room, ate some grapes they found on the table. The grapes were poisoned—filled with pneumonia bacteria.

One of the women held considerable property—the other not enough to interest Landru.

A few days later both were suffering with pneumonia. Landru pretended great interest in their welfare.

Of the rich woman the doctor said to Landru: "I am delighted to tell you, m'sieur, that madame took a turn for the better and will likely recover."

Of the poor woman whose death Landru did not plan, her sister said: "I much regret, m'sieur, but a very sad event has occurred here. My sister died of double pneumonia yesterday!"

Landru had killed the wrong woman.

fied," declared Monsieur Friedmann, whom I later on interviewed, and learned of this conversation. "If Madame Cuchet had gone to London she would certainly have written to her sister."

"No, I don't think she would," declared the clever criminal. "You do not know the secret that I learnt only ten days before she left me—that she was an agent of the contra-espionage department of the ministry of war. She told me so in strictest confidence—and I now only betray it because of your allegations against me. I tell you that Madame Cuchet and her son have gone to London as secret agents, at orders of the ministry, in order to follow a woman, spy who has left Paris for London. It is because of that I am content of their return."

This statement appealed to Monsieur Friedmann. He confessed to me that Landru, though suspected from the very beginning, cleverly adopted such an attitude of injured innocence that eventually he withdrew his threat, and begged forgiveness from him for having written that letter.

Landru departed in high spirits. Next day he motored to Mantes, where he called at the bureau of police, apologized for his absence, and asked if they desired to question him further regarding the smoke from his chimney of which neighbors had complained.

Again he great criminal, by his frankness and good humor, disarmed suspicion, and later he spent an hour or so at "The Lodge," at Vernouillet, of which he had kept the key. The scene of his crimes, as he walked through the small rooms, was stuffy and unwholesome. On the dining-room table there still stood a vase of brown, faded flowers.

But he cleared them off with a hard, dissonant laugh, and taking them into the garden, flung them into the ash-pit.

Then he went around the house, busily placing it in order, removing the dust with an old towel which he took from the kitchen. He was preparing the house of death to receive yet another victim!

He worked at cleaning up the place till dusk, and then, racing back to Neuilly in his car, he spent the night quietly with his wife and family.

For four days he remained with them, his brain busily plotting. Then, telling Madame Landru that he was compelled to travel on business to Biarritz, he left and returned to his "nest of love," murdered again written in his heart.

The police who patrolled the little town of Vernouillet, under the police of Mantes, were quite satisfied with his explanations regarding the smoke, therefore, the way was open for the middle-aged South American widow, Madame Labord-Line, or "Bresil," as he termed her in his famous notebook.

A week after his return to "The Lodge" he called upon her in his car and took her motoring out to Fontainebleau, where they lunched at the Hotel de France, and then strolled into the historic Palace, nearly opposite. She knew him as Monsieur Cuchet—for he had actually had the audacity to adopt the name of the woman he had murdered! On the following day she went to the Rue des Petits-Champs, when he persuaded her to hand over all her furniture for him to dispose of, assuring her that he could at the moment obtain very high prices for her. And she, under the influence of his charming personality, foolishly believed him.

Two days later he sold the lot to a dealer at Bagincolles. The day after he invited her out to spend the week-end in his little trou at Vernouillet. The day was the 15th of June. On the 16th there remained no trace of her, and none has ever been discovered. But it was proved that his profit was

about £57—a paltry sum, surely, for a woman's life!

As I study the mass of reports in those formidable dossiers, which would take months to read every word, I have come to the conclusion that he was rather taken by the South American widow. By some means she had attracted him, for he had kept in touch with her for an unusually long space of time.

Briefly I tell my readers, without fear of contradiction, for my assertion is supported by facts which came to the knowledge of the Surete after the trial at Versailles, that on the very night that Madame Labord-Line stepped from the arch-assassin's car in the narrow street of Vernouillet, she fell dead in that same little salle-a-manger in which Mme. Cuchet and her son had writhed in their death agonies. Landru used the same poison as before, and at 2 o'clock that morning he placed the body of his victim in the swift-running Oise river, whence nearly a year afterwards the remains were recovered five miles away and buried as a person unknown.

At the trial, the disappearance of this lady was never cleared up to the satisfaction of the court. There were many conflicting statements, but the fact nevertheless remained—a fact we now know—that Landru, having sold her possessions, kept her papers of identity among his effects. Why, nobody can tell.

But while Landru was toying with the affections of the South American lady, he had been making ardent pretense of love for a certain elderly but low-bred woman called Guillin.

Landru, though threatened by Monsieur Friedmann and suspected by the police, was utterly defiant, for he had put in one of the Paris daily journals an advertisement which read:

"SINGLE gentleman, aged forty-five, possessed of an income of four hundred pounds a year, desires to marry a quiet and homely lady with corresponding income."

Madame Guillin, who answered this advertisement, was over fifty, short stout, and not over prepossessing. But she possessed eight hundred pounds, which had been left her by a family at Melun, in which she had been for many years housekeeper.

It was not much, but it was much more than Landru had previously made out of his heartless and well-planned crimes. They met, and Madame Guillin was quickly conquered by his sweet and highly refined attitude.

The first meeting took place at Madame Guillin's flat in the Rue Crozatier, and next day Madame called at Bluebeard's cozy apartment in the Rue des Petits-Champs, where the dastardly trap had already been laid. In his notebook, in which he recorded so many facts and every centime of his daily expenses, he called her "Crozatier," just as he called Madame Labord-Line "Bresil."

MORE ABOUT LANDRU

A NOTHER installment of this remarkable story of the Loves of Landru will be published in the Washington Sunday Times next week.

FLAMBEAU PARTY TOURS BATTLEFIELDS

(Continued from First Page.)

This was the hill where the Doughboys got the name of "Devil Dogs" from the Huns, for the Americans threw away their packs, and even their gas masks, and when they lost their guns, fought savagely with their fists.

In the fighting on this hill, lasting three weeks or more, conspicuous bravery was shown by the New England National Guards, and others were the Twenty-eighth, the Forty-third, and the Twenty-sixth, besides the Twenty-seventh, and the Thirty-seventh divisions. One of the Flambeau party had a son in the Thirty-seventh, who came safely home.

A War Memorial

And now back to Chateau Thierry for a glimpse of an American social center there which is doing good work, a war memorial, nonsectarian in its benefits, though maintained by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Rev. Julian S. Wadsworth, director, with Mrs. Wadsworth and a corps of assistants, maintains here the usual features of such a settlement, with a trained nurse, creche or day nursery, educational classes, free circulating library and reading room, besides Boy Scouts, girls' social club, war museum, and other recreation opportunities.

"Les Devoirs de l'Amerique envers l'Europe" is the title of an interesting pamphlet by Dr. E. Blake, bishop of the Methodist Church in France, who reminds us that France came out of the war with a debt of fifty-three billions of dollars, which makes it all the more difficult for her to maintain

the philanthropic work needed.

Captain Bissell, who kept the bridge at Chateau Thierry, afterward came with his bride on their honeymoon to the old town again, and they stayed at this mission.

Chateau Thierry is famous, too, as the birthplace of Jean de la Fontaine, the French poet and fable writer, concerning whom there are here many associations. The Gateway to Paris is the old name for Chateau Thierry, since long ago.

After lunch in one of the rebuilt ruins, we may go on by train to Rheims, an hour away, and taking motor again, we pass through the Champagne country and Epernay, famed as the center of the wine industry, with underground cellars eighteen miles long and 100 feet deep. So well did the kaiser like a certain brand of champagne that he ordered his men not to harm in any way the little village bearing its name.

Cathedral Is Ravaged

There were in Rheims 60,000 people before the war, and not sixty were left when it had been shattered by the Germans. The great cathedral was, of course, the objective, but the shells hit right and left, everywhere but the cathedral. In front stood the beautiful statue of Jeanne d'Arc, which was never once touched, though today the sword she carries is a bit bent, memento of the troubled days she has seen.

St. Jeanne, as of course she is now, having been canonized by the church, was the protectress of the cathedral, so the pious French believe, and their prayers to her saved the lovely old city from complete destruction. Jeanne d'Arc was also believed to

have appeared in the clouds to the French soldiers, leading them on to victory in the final crisis when things looked darkest. Now they are bravely restoring the cathedral, which, though hit many times, was not demolished, only ravaged. The shells were thrown by machine guns, from a German fort, Nougat la Best, five miles away, while the French occupied the opposite hill, Fort de la Pompe, a ruined site, which the Flambeau party found very interesting.

No souvenirs are to be discovered, unless you care for a bit of barbed wire, of which there is an abundance, since it was here that the French barred the Germans from Rheims with miles of barbed-wire entanglements.

But Flambeau, with his usual "bonheur," picked up a rusted and blood-stained German sword, which had lain for a long time in the dust somewhere near the small shack, where it was displayed for sale, along with postcards of the neighborhood.

"Combien pour cela, monsieur?" "Dix francs, German!" with contempt on the "German." Other French souvenirs were higher in price, such as shells, guns and knives, but Flambeau was content, and he brings home to Washington his German sword, relic of the bloody fields of Rheims.

A Visit to Cathedral

"Kamerad!" cried his French chauffeur in mock alarm, with ready wit, as Flambeau returned to the car, brandishing the sword fiercely.

And now, a parting visit to the Cathedral, its walls still intact, and only here and there the bruises from the bursting bombs, while the floor is still littered with wreckage here and there, which workmen are clearing as they restore the cathedral once more, dating from 1211. In front, salute brave Jeanne d'Arc, who never forsook her position of guard, and recall that we have today in Washington a replica of this beautiful monument, erected last winter in Meridian Hill Park. Sixteenth street, by patriotic French women of America. And in Paris, also, is another replica of this great statue by the late Paul Dubois, leading French sculptor.

Tomorrow we will go to Versailles to visit the old palaces there, and especially to see the Hall of Mirrors, where the peace treaty was signed, and we will tour the lovely parks, the old forests, and stop at the mill where the unlucky Queen Marie Antoinette amused herself by playing peasant. Then, in store for the Flambeau party in Paris lies a grand surprise, the reception they will receive from the artists when the invitation of The Washington Times is announced to visit our Capital city next winter and exhibit there.

But, first, read with Victor Flambeau this touching tribute in a British newspaper picked up by accident, and remember you who have lost a son, brother, a lover, in the war, the others today mourn with you that the world is more sad the ever before; that Europe is now so gay though always just beautiful!

"IN MEMORIAM."

"MY EVERLASTING MEMORY TO MY DARLING ONLY BOY, FRANK M. FRAMBEAU, 107th WOODSTOCK, WHO FELL ON THE SOMME, JULY 28, 1916."

"Oh, for the touch of a hand and the sound of a voice that is still."